



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 740**

January Session, 2011

Substitute Senate Bill No. 927

*Senate, May 5, 2011*

The Committee on Appropriations reported through SEN. HARP of the 10th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10-16p of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2011*):

3 (a) As used in sections 10-16o to 10-16s, inclusive, 10-16u, 17b-749a  
4 and 17b-749c:

5 (1) "School readiness program" means a nonsectarian program that  
6 (A) meets the standards set by the department pursuant to subsection  
7 (b) of this section and the requirements of section 10-16q, and (B)  
8 provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience of not less  
9 than four hundred fifty hours and one hundred eighty days for eligible  
10 children, except as provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

11 (2) "Eligible children" means children three and four years of age  
12 and children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school

13 pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll in school and  
14 will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section 10-16t;

15 (3) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more  
16 of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or  
17 reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations,  
18 excluding such a school located in a priority school district pursuant to  
19 section 10-266p or in a former priority school district receiving a grant  
20 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and, on and after July 1, 2001,  
21 excluding such a school in a transitional school district receiving a  
22 grant pursuant to section 10-16u;

23 (4) "Severe need school" means a school in a priority school district  
24 pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district in  
25 which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to  
26 students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

27 (5) "Accredited" means accredited by the National Association for  
28 the Education of Young Children, a Head Start on-site program review  
29 instrument or a successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations,  
30 or otherwise meeting such criteria as may be established by the  
31 commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social  
32 Services, unless the context otherwise requires;

33 (6) "Year-round" means fifty weeks per year, except as provided in  
34 subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

35 (7) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Education; and

36 (8) "Department" means the Department of Education.

37 (b) (1) The Department of Education shall be the lead agency for  
38 school readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u,  
39 school readiness program providers eligible for funding from the  
40 Department of Education shall include local and regional boards of  
41 education, regional educational service centers, family resource centers  
42 and providers of child day care centers, as defined in section 19a-77,  
43 Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that

44 meet such standards established by the Commissioner of Education.  
45 The department shall establish standards for school readiness  
46 programs. The standards may include, but need not be limited to,  
47 guidelines for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including  
48 preliteracy development, lesson plans, parent involvement, staff  
49 qualifications and training, transition to school and administration.  
50 The department shall develop age-appropriate developmental skills  
51 and goals for children attending such programs. The commissioner, in  
52 consultation with the Commissioners of Higher Education and Social  
53 Services and other appropriate entities, shall develop a continuing  
54 education training program for the staff of school readiness programs.

55 (2) For purposes of this section: [, prior]

56 (A) Prior to July 1, 2015, "staff qualifications" means there is in each  
57 classroom an individual who has at least the following: [(1)] (i) A  
58 childhood development associate credential or an equivalent  
59 credential issued by an organization approved by the Commissioner of  
60 Education and [nine credits or more, and on and after July 1, 2005,]  
61 twelve credits or more [,] in early childhood education or child  
62 development, as determined by the Commissioner of Higher  
63 Education, after consultation with the Commissioners of Education  
64 and Social Services, from an institution of higher education accredited  
65 by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or regionally  
66 accredited; [(2)] (ii) an associate's degree with [nine credits or more,  
67 and on and after July 1, 2005,] twelve credits or more [,] in early  
68 childhood education or child development, as determined by the  
69 Commissioner of Higher Education, after consultation with the  
70 Commissioners of Education and Social Services, from such an  
71 institution; [(3)] (iii) a four-year degree with [nine credits or more, and  
72 on and after July 1, 2005,] twelve credits or more [,] in early childhood  
73 education or child development, as determined by the Commissioner  
74 of Higher Education, after consultation with the Commissioners of  
75 Education and Social Services, from such an institution; or [(4)] (iv)  
76 certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early  
77 childhood education; [or special education, and on and after]

78       (B) From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2020, "staff qualifications" means  
79 [there is in each classroom an individual who has at least the  
80 following: (A) A bachelor's degree in early childhood education or  
81 childhood development, or in a related field approved by the  
82 Commissioner of Education from an institution of higher education  
83 accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or  
84 regionally accredited; or (B) certification pursuant to section 10-145b  
85 with an endorsement in early childhood education or special  
86 education.] that for each preschool program accepting state funds,  
87 including school readiness funds and funds from the Department of  
88 Social Services, (i) at least fifty per cent of those individuals with the  
89 primary responsibility for a classroom of children hold (I) certification  
90 pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood  
91 education, or (II) a bachelor's degree in early childhood education,  
92 child study, child development or human growth and development  
93 from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of  
94 Governors of Higher Education, provided such bachelor's degree  
95 program is approved by the Departments of Higher Education and  
96 Education, and (ii) such remaining individuals hold an associate  
97 degree in early childhood education, child study, child development or  
98 human growth and development from an institution of higher  
99 education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education,  
100 provided such associate degree program is approved by the  
101 Departments of Higher Education and Education; and

102       (C) On and after July 1, 2020, "staff qualifications" means that for  
103 each preschool program accepting state funds, including school  
104 readiness funds and funds from the Department of Social Services, one  
105 hundred per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility  
106 for a classroom of children hold (i) certification pursuant to section 10-  
107 145b with an endorsement in early childhood education, or (ii) a  
108 bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, child  
109 development or human growth and development from an institution  
110 of higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher  
111 Education, provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by  
112 the Departments of Higher Education and Education.

113 (c) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the  
114 Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a grant program to  
115 provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for eligible  
116 children who reside in priority school districts pursuant to section 10-  
117 266p or in former priority school districts as provided in this  
118 subsection. Under the program, the grant shall be provided, in  
119 accordance with this section, to the town in which such priority school  
120 district or former priority school district is located. Eligibility shall be  
121 determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation  
122 as a priority school district for the initial year of application, except  
123 that if a school district that receives a grant pursuant to this subsection  
124 is no longer designated as a priority school district at the end of such  
125 five-year period, such former priority school district shall continue to  
126 be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection. Grant awards  
127 shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a  
128 satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town  
129 and the superintendent of schools for such priority school district or  
130 former priority school district shall submit a plan for the expenditure  
131 of grant funds and responses to the local request for proposal process  
132 to the Departments of Education and Social Services. The departments  
133 shall jointly review such plans and shall each approve the portion of  
134 such plan within its jurisdiction for funding. The plan shall: (1) Be  
135 developed in consultation with the local or regional school readiness  
136 council established pursuant to section 10-16r; (2) be based on a needs  
137 and resource assessment; (3) provide for the issuance of requests for  
138 proposals for providers of accredited school readiness programs,  
139 provided, after the initial requests for proposals, facilities that have  
140 been approved to operate a child care program financed through the  
141 Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority and have  
142 received a commitment for debt service from the Department of Social  
143 Services pursuant to section 17b-749i, are exempt from the requirement  
144 for issuance of annual requests for proposals; and (4) identify the need  
145 for funding pursuant to section 17b-749a in order to extend the hours  
146 and days of operation of school readiness programs in order to  
147 provide child day care services for children attending such programs.

148 (d) (1) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the  
149 Commissioner of Social Services, shall establish a competitive grant  
150 program to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for  
151 eligible children who reside (A) in an area served by a priority school  
152 or a former priority school as provided for in subdivision (2) of this  
153 subsection, (B) in a town ranked one to fifty when all towns are ranked  
154 in ascending order according to town wealth, as defined in subdivision  
155 (26) of section 10-262f, whose school district is not a priority school  
156 district pursuant to section 10-266p, or (C) in a town formerly a town  
157 described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, as provided for in  
158 [said] subdivision (2) of this subsection. A town in which a priority  
159 school is located, a regional school readiness council, pursuant to  
160 subsection (c) of section 10-16r, for a region in which such a school is  
161 located or a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision  
162 may apply for such a grant in an amount not to exceed one hundred  
163 seven thousand dollars per priority school or town. Eligibility shall be  
164 determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation  
165 as having a priority school or being a town described in subparagraph  
166 (B) of this subdivision for the initial year of application. Grant awards  
167 shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a  
168 satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town  
169 and the superintendent of schools of the school district or the regional  
170 school readiness council shall submit a plan, as described in subsection  
171 (c) of this section, for the expenditure of such grant funds to the  
172 Department of Education. In awarding grants pursuant to this  
173 subsection, the commissioner shall give preference to applications  
174 submitted by regional school readiness councils and may, within  
175 available appropriations, provide a grant in excess of one hundred  
176 seven thousand dollars to towns with two or more priority schools in  
177 such district. A town or regional school readiness council awarded a  
178 grant pursuant to this subsection shall use the funds to purchase  
179 spaces for such children from providers of accredited school readiness  
180 programs.

181 (2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (C) of this subdivision,  
182 commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, if a town

183 received a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection and is  
184 no longer eligible to receive such a grant, the town may receive a  
185 phase-out grant for each of the three fiscal years following the fiscal  
186 year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
187 this subsection.

188 (B) The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined as  
189 follows: (i) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such town  
190 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in  
191 an amount that does not exceed seventy-five per cent of the grant  
192 amount such town received for the town or school's final year of  
193 eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; (ii) for the  
194 second fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final  
195 grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that  
196 does not exceed fifty per cent of the grant amount such town received  
197 for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to  
198 subdivision (1) of this subsection; and (iii) for the third fiscal year  
199 following the fiscal year such town received its final grant pursuant to  
200 subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed  
201 twenty-five per cent of the grant amount such town received for the  
202 town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of  
203 this subsection.

204 (C) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, and each fiscal year  
205 thereafter, any town that received a grant pursuant to subparagraph  
206 (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection for the fiscal year ending June  
207 30, 2010, shall continue to receive a grant under this subsection even if  
208 the town no longer meets the criteria for such grant pursuant to  
209 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

210 (e) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, and each fiscal year  
211 thereafter, priority school districts and former priority school districts  
212 shall receive grants based on the sum of the products obtained by (A)  
213 multiplying the district's number of contracted slots on March thirtieth  
214 of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid,  
215 by the per child cost pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of

216 section 10-16q, except that such per child cost shall be reduced for slots  
217 that are less than year-round, and (B) multiplying the number of  
218 additional or decreased slots the districts have requested for the fiscal  
219 year in which the grant is to be paid by the per child cost pursuant to  
220 subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of [said] section 10-16q, except such  
221 per child cost shall be reduced for slots that are less than year-round. If  
222 said sum exceeds the available appropriation, such number of  
223 requested additional slots shall be reduced, as determined by the  
224 Commissioner of Education, to stay within the available appropriation.

225 (2) (A) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of  
226 this section are not expended, the Commissioner of Education may  
227 deposit such unexpended funds in the account established under  
228 section 10-16aa and use such unexpended funds in accordance with  
229 the provisions of [said] section 10-16aa.

230 (B) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012, and each fiscal year  
231 thereafter, if funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of  
232 this section are not expended, an amount up to five hundred thousand  
233 dollars of such unexpended funds shall be available for use in  
234 accordance with the provisions of this subparagraph for the  
235 subsequent fiscal year. The Commissioner of Education may use such  
236 unexpended funds on and after July 1, 2012, in consultation with the  
237 Commissioner of Higher Education, to support local school readiness  
238 programs in satisfying the staff qualifications requirements of  
239 subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this  
240 section. The local school readiness programs shall use any such funds  
241 to provide assistance to staff members at a maximum of five thousand  
242 dollars per staff member per year for the cost of higher education  
243 courses leading to a bachelor's degree in early childhood education,  
244 child study, child development or human growth and development at  
245 a public or independent nonprofit institution of higher education in  
246 this state, provided such staff members have applied for all available  
247 federal and state scholarships and grants, and such assistance does not  
248 exceed such staff members' financial need. Local school readiness  
249 programs shall apply for such unexpended funds in such program's



250 application for a school readiness grant pursuant to this section. The  
251 Commissioner of Education shall determine, in consultation with the  
252 Commissioner of Higher Education, how such unexpended funds shall  
253 be distributed.

254 [(B)] (C) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of  
255 this section are not expended pursuant to [said] subsection (c) [or] of  
256 this section, deposited pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this  
257 subdivision, or used pursuant to subparagraph (B) of this subdivision,  
258 the Commissioner of Education may use such unexpended funds to  
259 support local school readiness programs. The commissioner may use  
260 such funds for purposes including, but not limited to, (i) assisting local  
261 school readiness programs in meeting and maintaining accreditation  
262 requirements, (ii) providing training in implementing the preschool  
263 assessment and curriculum frameworks, including training to enhance  
264 literacy teaching skills, (iii) developing a state-wide preschool  
265 curriculum, (iv) developing student assessments for students in grades  
266 kindergarten to two, inclusive, (v) developing and implementing best  
267 practices for parents in supporting preschool and kindergarten student  
268 learning, (vi) developing and implementing strategies for children to  
269 transition from preschool to kindergarten, (vii) providing for  
270 professional development, including assisting in career ladder  
271 advancement, for school readiness staff, and (viii) providing  
272 supplemental grants to other towns that are eligible for grants  
273 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

274 (3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, for the fiscal  
275 years ending June 30, 2008, to June 30, 2011, inclusive, the Department  
276 of Education may retain up to one hundred ninety-eight thousand two  
277 hundred dollars of the amount appropriated for purposes of this  
278 section for coordination, program evaluation and administration.

279 (f) Any school readiness program that receives funds pursuant to  
280 this section or section 10-16u shall not discriminate on the basis of race,  
281 color, national origin, gender, religion or disability. For purposes of  
282 this section, a nonsectarian program means any public or private

283 school readiness program that is not violative of the Establishment  
284 Clause of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut or the  
285 Establishment Clause of the Constitution of the United States of  
286 America.

287 (g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by  
288 a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-  
289 16u shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by  
290 such town for early childhood education, provided a town may use an  
291 amount determined in accordance with this subsection for  
292 coordination, program evaluation and administration. Such amount  
293 shall be at least twenty-five thousand dollars but not more than  
294 seventy-five thousand dollars and shall be determined by the  
295 Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of  
296 Social Services, based on the school readiness grant award allocated to  
297 the town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-  
298 16u and the number of operating sites for coordination, program  
299 evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be increased by an  
300 amount equal to local funding provided for early childhood education  
301 coordination, program evaluation and administration, not to exceed  
302 twenty-five thousand dollars. Each town that receives a grant pursuant  
303 to [said] subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u shall  
304 designate a person to be responsible for such coordination, program  
305 evaluation and administration and to act as a liaison between the town  
306 and the Departments of Education and Social Services. Each school  
307 readiness program that receives funds pursuant to this section or  
308 section 10-16u shall provide information to the department or the  
309 school readiness council, as requested, that is necessary for purposes of  
310 any school readiness program evaluation.

311 (h) For the first three years a town receives grants pursuant to this  
312 section, such grants may be used, with the approval of the  
313 commissioner, to prepare a facility or staff for operating a school  
314 readiness program and shall be adjusted based on the number of days  
315 of operation of a school readiness program if a shorter term of  
316 operation is approved by the commissioner.

317 (i) A town may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible  
318 children who reside in such town at an accredited school readiness  
319 program located in another town. A regional school readiness council  
320 may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible children who  
321 reside in the region covered by the council at an accredited school  
322 readiness program located outside such region.

323 (j) Children enrolled in school readiness programs funded pursuant  
324 to this section shall not be counted (1) as resident students for  
325 purposes of subdivision (22) of section 10-262f, or (2) in the  
326 determination of average daily membership pursuant to subdivision  
327 (2) of subsection (a) of section 10-261.

328 (k) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this  
329 section may be allocated to the competitive grant program pursuant to  
330 subsection (d) of this section. The determination of the amount of such  
331 allocation shall be made on or before August first.

332 Sec. 2. (*Effective July 1, 2011*) The Department of Higher Education,  
333 in consultation with the Departments of Education and Social Services,  
334 the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, representatives from public  
335 and independent institutions of higher education in the state, early  
336 childhood education programs accepting school readiness funds  
337 pursuant to section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this  
338 act, and any other group or organization the Department of Higher  
339 Education deems appropriate, shall develop a plan for meeting the  
340 requirements in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of  
341 subsection (b) of section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by  
342 this act, and strategies for retaining those individuals who do not  
343 satisfy the requirements of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision  
344 (2) of subsection (b) of said section 10-16p. Not later than February 1,  
345 2012, the department shall submit such plan, in accordance with the  
346 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing  
347 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
348 relating to higher education and employment advancement and  
349 education. Not later than February 1, 2013, and annually thereafter

350 through February 1, 2015, the Department of Higher Education shall  
351 submit progress reports regarding the implementation of such plan, in  
352 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,  
353 to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
354 cognizance of matters relating to higher education, employment  
355 advancement and education.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2011</i>	10-16p
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2011</i>	New section

**HED**      *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*      ED  
**ED**      *Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*      APP  
**APP**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

### **OFA Fiscal Note**

#### **State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 12 \$	FY 13 \$
Education, Dept.	GF - See Below	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

#### **Explanation**

The bill does not result in an additional cost to the state or to municipalities. The bill does redistribute funds, totaling \$500,000 that would have otherwise lapsed. For FY 12 and each fiscal year thereafter, up to \$500,000 of the grant program established to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs for eligible children who reside in priority school districts, which are not expended, may be used to assist local school readiness programs in satisfying the staff requirements contained in the bill. For FY 11 this account is anticipated to lapse approximately \$1 million.

Additionally, the bill (1) makes various procedural and staffing changes to school readiness programs and (2) requires the Department of Higher Education, in consultation with various other entities, to develop a plan for meeting the various staffing changes. Neither of these changes is anticipated to result in a fiscal impact.

#### **The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the unexpended school readiness funds.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 927*****AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill makes several changes to the required qualifications for early childhood educators. It modifies the (1) staff qualification requirements that are in effect until July 1, 2015 and (2) criteria for eligible degree programs and certifications. It specifies that, on and after July 1, 2015, the staff qualification requirements apply to all preschool programs accepting state funds, including school readiness funds and funds from the Department of Social Services (DSS).

The bill also delays, from July 1, 2015 until July 1, 2020, the requirement that programs have a person in each classroom with a bachelor's degree in certain fields or a teaching certificate. It instead requires (1) at least 50% of early childhood educators with primary responsibility for a classroom to meet this requirement by July 1, 2015 and (2) remaining individuals to have an associate's degree. Beginning July 1, 2020, the bill requires all such educators to meet the requirement to have a bachelor's degree or teaching certificate. It requires the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to develop a plan to meet these requirements.

Additionally, the bill specifically allows up to \$500,000 in unexpended school readiness funds each fiscal year to be used in the subsequent fiscal year to help local school readiness programs' staff members meet the degree requirements. It allows staff members to receive up to \$5,000 per year for this purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

**STAFF QUALIFICATIONS*****Current Requirements Until July 1, 2015***

Under current law until July 1, 2015, each school readiness classroom must have an individual with a (1) credential, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree that included 12 credits or more in early childhood education or child development or (2) a teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood education or special education. The credentialing organization must be approved by the education commissioner, and the early childhood education or childhood development credits must be from an institution accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education (BGHE) or regionally accredited.

The bill (1) specifies that the credential must be a childhood development associate credential or equivalent; (2) specifies that the early childhood education or child development credits must be determined by the DHE commissioner, in consultation with the education and social services commissioners; and (3) eliminates special education as a qualifying endorsement for a teaching certificate.

***Requirements After July 1, 2015***

Under current law, after July 1, 2015, each school readiness classroom must have an individual who has (1) a bachelor's degree from an institution accredited by BGHE or regionally accredited in early childhood education, childhood development, or a related field approved by the education commissioner or (2) a teaching certificate with an endorsement in early childhood or special education.

The bill instead requires, from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, that 50% of individuals with primary responsibility for a classroom of children meet the above requirement. Early childhood educators who do not meet this requirement must hold an associate's degree in an eligible field.

The bill also (1) modifies this requirement to cover all preschool programs accepting state funds, including school readiness and DSS

funds, and (2) specifies that everyone with primary responsibility for a classroom with children must meet the requirement (current law only requires that one such individual be in the classroom).

Additionally, the bill:

1. eliminates the ability to meet the degree requirement by attending a regionally accredited institution (i.e., one that is out-of-state);
2. eliminates special education as a qualifying endorsement for a teaching certificate;
3. specifies that eligible degree programs are early childhood education, child study, child development, or human growth and development; and
4. requires the programs to be approved by the Department of Education (SDE) and DHE.

### ***Requirements Beginning July 1, 2020***

Effective July 1, 2020, the bill requires all, rather than 50%, of the individuals with primary responsibility for a classroom with children to meet the above requirement to have a bachelor's degree or teaching certificate.

### ***Plan Required***

The bill requires DHE to develop a plan to meet the bachelor's degree and teaching certificate requirements, including strategies for retaining individuals who do not meet them. It must consult with SDE; DSS; the Office of Workforce Competitiveness; and representatives from (1) public and independent institutions of higher education in Connecticut, (2) early childhood education programs accepting school readiness funds, and (3) any other group or organization DHE deems appropriate.

DHE must submit the plan by February 1, 2012 to the Education and Higher Education committees. From 2013 to 2015, it must submit



annual reports (by February 1 each year) to the above committees on the plan's implementation.

### **SCHOOL READINESS**

By law, the education commissioner may use unexpended school readiness funds for several purposes, including professional development for school readiness staff. The bill specifically allows up to \$500,000 in unexpended school readiness funds each fiscal year to be used in the subsequent fiscal year to help local school readiness programs' staff members meet the qualification requirements. It allows staff members to receive up to \$5,000 in assistance per year for courses leading to a bachelor's degree in the fields listed above up to the extent of their financial need. Staff members must (1) have first applied for all available federal and state scholarships and grants and (2) attend a public or nonprofit institution of higher education in Connecticut.

Under the bill, FY 13 is the first year that unexpended funds may be used for this purpose. The SDE commissioner, in consultation with the DHE commissioner, must determine how the unexpended funds are distributed, and local school readiness programs must apply for unexpended funds in their school readiness grant application.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference  
Yea 20 Nay 0 (03/15/2011)

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute  
Yea 32 Nay 0 (03/25/2011)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute  
Yea 49 Nay 2 (04/26/2011)